

Did Dulles Call Soviet On Aswan?

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Washington
Did John Foster Dulles deliberately withdraw promised American aid to Egypt for the Aswan Dam in order to "call Russia's hand" and force a showdown with President Nasser of Egypt.

This is the question Washington is asking as a result of separate assertions by two pro-Dulles writers in the Luce publications, who argue that the Secretary of State thereby took a "calculated risk" in "the game of economic competition" with the Soviet.

The assertions are bound to have international echoes and seem likely to reopen the whole question of what precipitated the Middle East crisis that led ultimately to Israeli-French and British intervention.

Author Depicts Move

One statement already has been the subject of congressional inquiry. C. D. Jackson, now chief editorial writer of Time magazine, and till 1954 special assistant to President Eisenhower, told a Senate subcommittee under Senator J. W. Fulbright (D) of Arkansas, March 18, that he had been "misquoted." Mr. Jackson's remarks were made in a speech in Toronto, March 12, and were quoted by the Toronto Globe & Mail, the Associated Press, John Reade, a Canadian newscaster, and others.

With the dust hardly settled from the Jackson incident, John R. Beal, diplomatic correspondent of Time magazine, in a new book, "John Foster Dulles: A Biography," declares that the secretary "brutally" withdrew United States offer to help finance the Aswan Dam in a calculated risk "to call Russia's hand" in the cold war.

Explaining the move, Mr. Beal declares,

"... the decision was ... comparable ... to the calculated risks of war (taken) in Korea and Formosa."

The object of what Mr. Beal calls "a truly major gambit in the cold war" was to reveal the falsity of Moscow's economic offers. The idea was to precipitate an incident where the United States would publicly rebuff a neutral attempting to play off Moscow against America, and thus create a vivid object lesson.

Both Claim Facts

Both of the Luce writers emphasize their intimacy with the facts. Mr. Beal declares his book "benefits from personal interviews."

Newscaster Reade quoted Mr. Jackson as telling his Toronto audience:

"... Lunch (for publisher Henry Luce, Secretary Dulles, and Mr. Jackson) was to be served in this private room (at the State Department) and the secretary came in a little late to announce that he had just told the Egyptian Ambassador that the United States would not advance the previously offered billion dollars for the Aswan Dam. There was some speculation as to what the Egyptian reaction would be, and among the alternatives assessed was the Egyptian nationalization of the Suez Canal ... which didn't seem to disturb the assembled company very much."

Mr. Jackson later told the Fulbright committee that Mr. Reade, the Associated Press, the Toronto Globe & Mail, and others had garbled his luncheon address.

Approach to 'Brink'

Mr. Beal now offers what appears to be much the same version of the disputed matter in book form. He declares that this was an example of Mr. Dulles reaching "the brink" in the diplomatic game. The secretary had determined to force a showdown with the Soviet Union over competition between the two countries in supplying economic aid abroad.

Mr. Beal continues, "For Dulles, a moment of cold war climax had come. It was necessary to call Russia's hand in the game of economic competition. It was necessary to make the demonstration on a grand scale."

"Nasser combined the right timing, the right geography, and the right order of magnitude for a truly major gambit in the cold war."

Mr. Beal continues, "Since the issue involved more than simply denying Nasser money for a dam, a polite and concealed rebuff would fail to make the really important point."

Built-In Moral

"It had to be forthright, carrying its own built-in moral for neutrals in a way that the formula of applied propaganda would not cheapen."

A new investigation by Senator Fulbright seems almost inevitable.

The Luce publications generally have been sympathetic to Secretary Dulles. Mrs. Clare Boothe Luce, the publisher's

wife, was Ambassador to Italy. A eulogy in Life appeared Jan. 16, 1956 "How Dulles Averted War" by James Shepley, chief of the Time-Life Washington bureau. By internal evidence and direct quotation it appeared that Mr. Shepley had enjoyed official aid in preparing the piece.

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